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[We print the following Report of a steadily thriving Provincial Choral Society, because many subjects are suggested in the course of it, well worthy the consideration of other Provincial Choral Societies, or of those who are desirous to promote the formation of a Choral Society where none already exists. We suspect that the Report has been drawn up by the Director; since no one else could have been so silent with regard to the almost vital advantages this society has derived from that gentleman's exertions. His modesty on this point, should not occasion it to be overlooked, that if other societies desire equal success, they should not omit to secure the services of as active a member as Mr. Wm. Higgs has been to the Gloucester Society.]

#### REPORT OF THE GLOUCESTER CHORAL SOCIETY, 1856.

*Presidents:* T. TURNER, Esq., W. P. PRICE, Esq., M.P.

*Director:* Mr. W. HIGGS.

*Treasurer:* Mr. H. A. WHITEHEAD.

The Gloucester Choral Society has now maintained an active existence for several years. It originated in a desire to make Vocal Music popular, and to introduce it with its best specimens, both of poetry and harmony, as an elevating means of social and domestic entertainment among the middle and working classes. An early entry in its Minute Book says—"The objects of the Choral Society shall be the cultivation and practice of Vocal Music, with a view to the improvement of Congregational Singing in public worship, and also to supply its members with a social and healthful means of recreation of a moral and intellectual character." These objects have been uniformly kept in view; but the public performance of select pieces of Sacred and Secular Music, in illustration of the progress of the Society, seemed to follow of necessity. Concerts were at first given without either professional assistance or a musical instrument, and were considered so encouraging that Oratorios were subsequently performed, as much to the satisfaction of some as to the astonishment of others, who either doubted the capabilities of Hullah's system of instruction, or were not aware of the results which are usually attainable by steady and unflinching perseverance. Its more useful but less ostentatious results have, however, been seen in the promotion of domestic entertainment, and in the general improvement of Congregational Singing throughout the city, both in Churches and Chapels, many of which have now a respectable choir, where formerly the singing was little better than a penance. To this we may add, that the Philharmonic Society, the Cathedral Choir, and to some extent the Musical Festival, are indebted to the Choral Society for several of their performers. Nor are its benefits confined to our own city. Neighbouring towns and villages have been stimulated to, and assisted in similar and successful efforts; several hundreds of young persons having, in the course of the twelve years during which the Society has been in operation, received some rudimentary knowledge of music which they would make available elsewhere. In a few cases it has given pupils to professional teachers, but the Society has never aimed to produce artists, conceiving that such a design would be foreign to its legitimate objects, and generally unsuitable to the position and daily duties of its members. Some inappropriate criticism of the Society's public performances might occasionally have been spared if this circumstance had been properly appreciated; in general, however, it has been kept in view, and the liberal encouragement of the press has done much to give stability to the Society. The Society is greatly indebted to the liberality through which it has derived the advantage of a very superior hall for public concerts, and still more to the fostering and paternal consideration of its Presidents.

The inevitable loss of members which arises almost

every month from domestic and other changes, incident to young persons such as usually compose the Society, has created the necessity for training at least one elementary class every season, a task, the labor of which our Director has regularly undertaken; but the accession of more members from respectable local families would be a source of great encouragement, and would in many respects have a beneficial influence. As the whole agency of the Society is an unpaid one, and has always been so, except during two seasons, in which the experiment of engaging a professional director was made, a trifling subscription of one shilling per quarter suffices to meet the current expenses of a practice room and a small supply of printed music. If public performances were dispensed with, there would be no necessity to seek assistance from patrons and friends; but the risk and expense of these, especially when talented artists are engaged for the principal parts, render it highly desirable to have the security of sufficient subscribers to such concerts, and thus to render the liability to loss less frequent than it has been.

The Society are now desirous of giving at least three concerts in the ensuing season; and with a view to increase the attendance, and insure a satisfactory result to the funds, so as to be able to make a considerable addition to their stock of music, which is much reduced, they appeal to those who think well of their Institution to favor them with subscriptions. Any Officer of the Society will be happy to receive subscriptions or donations.

Tickets to Reserved Seats will be forwarded to patrons and subscribers, with Programmes of performances, as soon as the arrangements are completed.

A. HANCOCK, Northgate Street, } *Secretaries.*  
H. MAYER, Westgate Street, }

#### MUSIC AMONG THE POETS AND POETICAL WRITERS.

By MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

(Continued from page 316.)

"Circe with the Syrens three,  
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,  
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs;  
Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,  
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,  
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause."

*Milton.*

The accompaniments to mermaids singing, are thus described:—

"With that the rolling sea resounding soft  
In his big bass them fitly answered;  
And on the rock the waves breaking aloft  
A solemn mean\* unto them measured;  
The whiles sweet Zephyrus loud whistled  
His treble, a strange kind of harmony."—*Spenser.*

And a band of wood-gods, thus:—

"They all, as glad as birds of joyous prime,  
Thence led her forth, about her dancing round,  
Shouting and singing all a shepherd's rhyme,  
And with green branches strewing all the ground,  
Do worship her as queen, with olive garland crown'd;  
And all the way their merry pipes they sound,  
That all the woods with double echo ring,  
And with their horned feet do wear the ground,  
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring."—*Spenser.*

\* Tenor.

† Una.

"The pipe of Pan, to shepherds  
Couched in the shadow of Mœnalian pines,  
Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the leopards,  
That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,  
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!  
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground  
In cadence,—and Silenus swang  
This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned."

*Wordsworth.*

"The turmoil hushed, celestial springs  
Of music opened, and there came a blending  
Of fragrance, underived from earth,  
With gleams that owed not to the sun their birth,  
And that soft rustling of invisible wings  
Which Angels make, on works of love descending."

*Wordsworth.*

The poet has thus commemorated the unearthly strains of certain human water-nymphs, who haunt the Staub-bach, Lauterbrunnen:—

"No mermaids warble—to allay the wind  
Driving some vessel toward a dangerous beach—  
More thrilling melodies; Witch answering Witch,  
To chant a love-spell, never intertwined  
Notes shrill and wild with art more musical."

*Wordsworth.*

To the sonnet containing the above passage, its author appended the following note:—

"The vocal powers of these musical beggars may seem to be exaggerated; but this wild and savage air was utterly unlike any sounds I had ever heard; the notes reached me from a distance, and on what occasion they were sung I could not guess, only they seemed to belong, in some way or other, to the waterfall, and reminded me of religious services chanted to streams and fountains in Pagan times. Mr. Southey has thus accurately characterised the peculiarity of this music:—'While we were at the waterfall, some half-score peasants, chiefly women and girls, assembled just out of reach of the spring, and set up—surely, the wildest chorus that ever was heard by human ears,—a song not of articulate sounds, but in which the voice was used as a mere instrument of music, more flexible than any which art can produce,—sweet, powerful, and thrilling beyond description.'"



The wood-nymphs are thus apostrophised:—

"This hum in air, which the still ear perceives,  
Is your unquarrelling voice among the leaves;  
And now I find, whose are the laughs and stirrings  
That make the delicate birds dart so in whisks and whirrings."—*Leigh Hunt.*

The music given at the 'Feast of the Violets,' is here described:—

"A concert arose,—so delicious, so new,  
So earnest, so fond, so appealing to you,  
The notes seem'd to bathe in the tears which they drew.  
Then there issued (get Vincent Novello, some day,  
To show you the strain, for he took it away)  
A world-heavy gust, like all organs in one,  
Or as though had swept earthward the roar of the sun,  
Or the face of some god with his thunder-loud tresses,  
Who comes like a terror, stays gently, and blesses,  
And leaves us secure in the strength of humility."

*Leigh Hunt.*

"Now, Music, wake from out thy charmed sleep;  
And bid thy sweet soul weep  
Her life away in some immortal tune!  
Or, let thy soaring spirit run  
Aloft upon some wild enchanted air,  
Before whose breath despair  
Dies, like a mist before the uprisen sun!

Come forth, lost Spirits of the world of sound!

Leave, leave awhile your aye-sweet tasks above;

And rear your starry heads with music crowned,

And once more weave an earthly song of love!

Weave it around the gentle heart,—

Handel, Haydn, great Beethoven,

And thou, sweet, sweet-souled Mozart!

Ah! sure to sing and love must be the angel's part.

Therefore, pour your skyey treasures—

Grand, unknown, immortal measures,

Such as ne'er the blooming Earth

Heard since first she burst to birth,

And in endless ether hung,

While the stars of morning sung!"—*Barry Cornwall.*

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*All communications must be authenticated by the proper name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.*

*This Journal is published on the 1st of every month.*

*We would request those who send us country newspapers, wishing us to read particular paragraphs, to mark the passage, by cutting a slit in the paper near it.*

*The late hour at which Advertisements reach us, interferes much with their proper classification.*

*We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.*

*Colored Envelopes are sent to all Subscribers whose payment in advance is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscriber neglects to renew. We again remind those who are disappointed in getting back numbers, that only the music pages are stereotyped, and of the rest of the paper, only sufficient are printed to supply the current sale.*

*J. W. C. is informed that the publishers, respecting whom he enquires, no longer carry on business; the plates of their works will probably be found distributed among the trade.*

#### Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

**CHOIR BENEVOLENT FUND.**—The Norfolk District Choral Festival took place at Norwich, on the 31st of September. Great interest was excited by the performance of a Grand Choral Service in the Cathedral, by selections from the Norwich, Cambridge, Ely, London, Rochester, Peterborough, and Canterbury Choirs. About 4,000 persons were present. So great was the demand for tickets, that as many as 7,000 might have been supplied, if the Cathedral could have accommodated them. Above £220 was collected on the occasion. The members of the various choirs, and a party of friends, dined together in the evening.

**STALEYBRIDGE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.**—The first season of this Society was opened with a concert in the Town Hall, on the 9th October, which was very numerously attended, the subscribers and their friends alone taking up almost the whole body of the hall. The programme offered great variety; and in addition to the society's band and chorus, the services of Miss Armstrong and Mr. and Mrs. Weiss had been secured for the occasion. The conductor was Mr. John Marsden.

**STROUD.**—A new oratorio, entitled *Moses*, and composed by J. M. Capes, Esq., was performed on Thursday, Oct. 23, by the Philharmonic Society of Stroud. Much interest had been raised in the neighbourhood for some time previously, and one of the largest and most respectable audiences ever known in Stroud were drawn together upon the occasion. The oratorio went off with great *clat*, and many of the solos, duets, &c., were encoored with enthusiasm. The principal vocalists were Mrs. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Paget, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Wheeler, and Mr. Gardner. The band and chorus, numbering about 50 performers, were ably conducted by Mr. J. Chew.